GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNITION

OF

NON-CREDIT BEARING SHORT COURSES

1. Introduction

1.1. This document entails the guidelines for recognizing Non-Credit Bearing Short Courses (NCBSCs) by HRDC. The Guidelines lay out the process from receiving the application to the final stage where the short course is recognized by the Council.

2. Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that there is consistency in recognizing NCBSCs. The primary purpose of recognizing NCBSC is to confirm that the short course is relevant and responsive to acquisition of the required competencies.

NCBSCs are skills development interventions to address the operational skills gaps in the industry and to respond to the new skills demand in the economy.

NCBSCs make provision for workplaces to close employees' competency gaps through tailor-made training solutions/services.

3. Scope

3.1. These guidelines cover the recognition of NCBSCs from the time an application is received and registered by HRDC to a point where a decision is made to recognize or reject and communicated accordingly to the ETP.

4. Background

4.1. Non-Credit Bearing Short Courses (NCBSCs) were processed and recognized by Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA) until March 2021 when the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology transferred the function to HRDC.

4.2. NCBSCs are not directly part of the National Credit Qualification Framework (NCQF) since they do not attract credits towards award of a qualification but rather interventions for enhancing skills in the workplace. According to the Human Resource Development Strategy, skills training and development in workplaces are coordinated by HRDC and hence the Ministry found the Council more suited to coordinate NCBSC function.

4.3. Reports and Policy documents, primarily the National Human Resource Development Strategy (NHRDS) and Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP) have identified the shortage of relevant skills as one of the impediments to economic growth and competitiveness. Shortage of relevant skills in the industry can be addressed by effective implementation of NCBSCs.

5. Definition of Terms

5.1. **Application** – completed form with all the accompanying documents to support the ETP submission in meeting NCBSC Requirements as defined in the NCBSC Guidelines.

5.2. **Approval** - Is a decision reached as confirmation that the short course meets the NCBSC criteria and has the potential to fulfil acquisition of the required competencies, used interchangeably with recognition to mean the same thing.

5.3. **Council** – means Human Resource Development Council (HRDC).

5.4. **Credit** – a measure of the amount of learning workload and time to determine if the requirements of a qualification or unit standard registered on the Qualification Framework has been attained, measured in terms of notional learning hours;

5.5. **Education and Training Provider (ETP)** - an entity that provides or organizes a programme of education and training, including the provision of professional development services i.e., conventional, workplaces and consultancies registered and accredited by Botswana Qualification Authority.

5.6. **Fields of Learning** – means a particular area of learning used to identify learning classifications to reflect skills disciplines within various sectors of the economic.

5.7. **Independent Reviewer** – an expert or panel of experts derived from the Industry or educational establishment constituted to evaluate an application against guidelines for recognition of short courses. These may include professional bodies, associations or subject matter experts, if applicable.

5.8. **Learning outcomes** - means the statement of what the learner should know, understand and be able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

5.9. **Learning programme** - means the sequential learning activities, associated with curriculum implementation, leading to the achievement of a particular qualification in accordance with NCQF.

5.10. **Non-Credit Bearing Short Course (NCBSC)** - refers to rapid skills development interventions which do not carry credits. They are intended to equip trainees (employees) with operation specific skills or upgrade existing skills. NCBSC shall be used interchangeably with short course to mean the same thing. The duration of a short course shall not exceed a period of three months.

5.11. **Recognition of NCBSC -** Is a decision reached as confirmation that the short course is relevant and responsive to fulfil acquisition of the required competencies.

5.12. **Short Course** - a type of short learning programme through which a learner may not be awarded credits depending on the purpose of the programme. It ranges from 3 months.

6. Abbreviations

AO	Accounts Officer
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COO	Chief Operations Officer
DHRDF	Director Human Resource Development Funding
ETP	Education and Training Provider
HO	Helpdesk Officer
IR	Independent Reviewer
MCBSC	Manager Non-Credit Bearing Short Courses
NCBSC	Non-Credit Bearing Short Courses
PO	Processing Officer
RO	Records Officer
TA	Technical Assistant
VC	Vetting Committee

7. Responsibility and authority

7.1. The Department of Funding is responsible for the effective implementation of these guidelines.

8. Process workflow

Workflow Turn-Around-Time- **30 working days**

Process Activities	Responsibility	Instrument/Tool
Submit applications	ETP	Online System e.g. Email
Check applications for completeness and send acknowledgement through a letter or email	Helpdesk Officer	NCBSC application form and acknowledgement template
Confirm payment and register duly completed applications. Submit list to Manager NCBSC for allocation	Helpdesk Officer	Network Folders

Allocate eligible applications to processing officers for processing	NCBSC Manager	Network Folders
Check application for compliance	Processing Officers	Validation Template
Process/Assess Applications ▪ Conduct desk top evaluation ▪ Appoint IR *(If Applicable)* ▪ Request for additional information ▪ Evaluate the application ▪ Submit evaluation/validation report	Processing Officer	Validation Report Template, Request for additional information template (Where Applicable; IR Appointment Letter, Request for Validation Visit, Claim Form)
Verify the Validation Report. Prepare Recommendation Report Prepare Approval Sheet	Manager NCBSC	Recommendation Report Form
Present recommendation report to Approval Committee	Manager NCBSC	Recommendation report Approval Pack
Validate Recommendation Report Approve or reject the Approval Pack Sanction preparation of Decision Letter	Approval Committee	Approval Sheet
Prepare Decision Letter	Approval Committee Secretary	Decision Letter Template
Sign Decision Letter	COO	Decision Letter
Dispatch Decision Letter Send Copy to Records	Approval Committee Secretary	Decision Letter
Capture the decision on the Register to close the NCBSC Validation Process.	Helpdesk Officer	ETP Folder

SECTION A: CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION OF NON-CREDIT BEARING SHORT COURSES

This section provides all requirements to be met by ETPs for recognition of Non-Credit Bearing Short Courses.

CRITERION 1: DEATAILS OF THE ETP and ACCREDITATION STATUS

HRDC seeks to establish that the ETP that submits an application provides full details for recognition is accredited with BQA. The ETP shall;

a) provide full names and contact details as provided for in the application form; and
b) provide a copy of accreditation certificate as evidence of BQA accreditation.

CRITERION 2: SHORT COURSES GENERAL INFORMATION

HRDC seeks to ensure that key information about the Short Course for which approval is sought is clearly articulated. The applicant shall:

a) observe the minimum short course duration of **one (1) day (8 hours)** up to a maximum of **three 3 months (480 hours)**;
b) provide the course title/domain to stipulate the requisite competencies to be acquired;
c) provide the duration of the short course (in hours);
d) indicate the field of learning within which the NCBSC falls; and
e) provide the course status i.e. select if it is a New Application or Renewal.

CRITERION 3: COURSE RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

HRDC seeks to establish that the ETP has done the necessary ground work to ensure that the course is informed by the skills needs of the labour market through stakeholder engagements and desktop research. The ETP must provide proof of alignment to national skills priorities, where applicable. The ETP has to provide a summary of their findings on these aspects.

- **Rationale:** The statement of the intended skills sets to be acquired and factors that necessitated the development of this short course with reference to key national strategies and policy documents such as National Development Plans, NHRD Plans, Labour Market Survey Reports or Manpower Needs Reports, etc .

- **Purpose:** The purpose statement highlights key areas that constitute the scope of the course content to be covered with a clear expression of the course outcomes

CRITERION 4: SKILLS/TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

HRDC seeks to establish that the ETP has done the necessary skills needs assessment and provide evidence to ensure that the course is informed by the skills needs of the labour market. The ETP must provide proof of alignment to national sector plans or skills priorities, where applicable.

CRITERION 5: TARGET GROUP/POPULATION MODE OF DELIVERY

5.1 Target Group

HRDC seeks to establish that the ETP clearly indicated access and equity principles provided for through recognition of current qualifications and professional work experience, as influenced by the employee operational skills needs. The applicant shall:

a) provide minimum entry qualifications;
c) indicate any prescriptive designations; and
d) identify any work experience required.

5.2 Mode of Delivery

HRDC is to establish that the Mode of Delivery adopted by the ETP is consistent with the nature of the course outcomes. The applicant shall:

a) specify the mode of delivery appropriate for the desired outcomes of the course; fulltime, part-time, online or hybrid; and
b) show the preferred Mode(s) by ticking on the appropriate box(es).

CRITERION 6: COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

HRDC seeks to establish that the ETP clearly stipulates the requisite competencies to be acquired with clear distinction of the desired domain (affective, cognitive or psychomotor) and shows appropriate assessment strategies to measure the level at which outcomes are attained. The ETP shall;

a) ensure the short course is organized into learning outcomes and the scope of content for each unit is appropriate;
b) maintain alignment between learning outcomes and the course content/topics;
c) ensure that action verbs used are consistent with the expected nature and level of competence to reflect the desired domain;
d) ensure that teaching, learning and assessment strategies are consistent with the stipulated learning outcomes and appropriate for development of the required knowledge, skills and attitude;
e) present content in a logically sequenced manner and ensure congruence between topics, delivery and assessment strategies;
f) state how assessments will be administered e.g. written, practical, course work**,** participatory or attendance rate and stipulate the assessment format i.e. Formative or Summative;
g) take note of NCBSC provision for Single Unit Courses and Modularised Courses with distinctive processing fees;
h) Maintain a maximum of **five (5) modules** per short course unless otherwise advised by the relevant Professional Body and/or Association.

CRITERION 7 : CERTIFICATION

HRDC seeks to establish the eligibility requirements for issuance of the certificate and the type of certificate to be issued. The applicant shall:

a) show the type of certificate to be issued (Attendance, Participation or Completion);
b) show modules covered in modularized courses for CPD monitoring purposes; and
c) provide a sample certificate with all the necessary content details including safety features.

CRITERION 8: POST-TRAINING ACTIVITIES AND LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

HRDC seeks to establish that where post training and learning implementation support is a requirement, there are detailed arrangements provided for execution and provision of mentoring and coaching as appropriate. The applicant shall:

a) show the type of post-training learning implementation support to be provided;
b) indicate the timeline on execution of the implementation support from last date of training;
c) present detailed post training activities plan to show the content and approach of the support; and
d) show provision to measure the impact of training.

CRITERION 9: DELIVERY SCHEDULE

HRDC seeks to establish that the ETP has a course delivery schedule that shows logical progression of content/topics to be covered. The schedule should make adequate provision for various delivery activities (practical, case studies, simulations etc). The ETP shall;

a) develop a plan to show the breakdown of course content into topics for ease of delivery;
b) arrange the topics in a logical sequence;
c) ensure that total notional learning hours match the duration of the course and meet the minimum delivery period of eight (8) hours; and
d) ensure that notional learning hours for each activity are realistic and match the nature of learning outcomes and the content dealt with.

CRITERION 10: RESOURCES

HRDC seeks to establish that the ETP has the capability and capacity to support sustained delivery of the course in all delivery modes, which must include Material, Human Resources and SHE Strategies. The applicant shall:

a) provide information on the targeted minimum staff qualifications, professional competence and experience of trainers suitable to facilitate delivery of the short course;
b) provide a list of resources required, including equipment, specialist facilities, workshops, labs and books for suitable delivery and assessment of the course;

c) provide Safety Health and Environment strategies to ensure that the facilities are safe and conducive for teaching and learning, including Contagious Diseases Protocols; and
d) show readiness to provide evidence of the aforementioned during Validation Visits or Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Visits.

CRITERION 11: THIRD PARTY ARRANGEMENTS (Where applicable)

HRDC seeks to establish that where there are arrangements between an ETP and third parties, those arrangements are legal and will facilitate quality teaching and learning. The applicant shall:

a) show the type of contractual obligations (MoA or MoU) with the third-party showing start and end dates;
b) explicitly show the type of partnership arrangement, e.g. Franchising etc.; and
c) articulate clearly the roles and responsibilities of each party on delivery, assessment and certification.

CRITERION 12: INFORMATION ON BENCHMARKS

HRDC seeks to establish that the ETP has made an effort to promote comparability of the short course with similar courses offered in the region and internationally to enhance the short course's competiveness in the global space. The ETP shall:

a) provide a purpose statement for this intervention;
b) highlight the type of course they benchmarked with and acknowledge the source;
c) provide summary of the course content (Learning outcomes, learning and assessment strategies employed; and
d) discuss the learnings from the benchmarks by sharing the similarities or differences between the short course and the benchmarks.

CRITERION 13: ANNEXURES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

HRDC wishes to establish that the ETP provide a list of all the supporting documents towards development and delivery of the short course. The applicant shall:

a) list the documents which should be attached to the application upon submission. This includes HRDC Receipt, Valid Accreditation Certificate and Sample Certificate; and
b) list all documents that HRDC could look at to validate evidence against information critical to course development, teaching, learning and assessment strategies. This should include information on the facilitators for the course, etc (Needs assessment report, Tutor & Learner Activity Packs, Course Manuals, Trainers CVs).

CRITERION 14: COURSES ENDORSEMENT (Where applicable)

HRDC seeks to establish that, where a short course falls within a regulated profession the ETP has evidence to prove that;

a) the ETP has engaged with the respective Professional/Regulatory bodies or Associations to ensure that the course meets the industry standards; and
b) the ETP has an endorsement letter from the relevant Professional/Regulatory Bodies or Associations in support of the course when submitting the application to HRDC for processing.

SECTION B: NCBSC RECOGNITION PROCESS (for official use only)

1. Payment of Processing Fees

1.1 It is a pre-requisite that the ETP makes upfront payment for applications of short courses to be submitted to HRDC for recognition, including additional module costs at 10% of the standard processing fees for each module in the modularized courses.

1.2 A copy of HRDC receipt must be attached to the application form as proof of payment.

1.3 Module Fees will be charged from the second module onwards.

2. Receipt of Application

2.1 A customer will submit a duly completed Application Form as per the Guidelines.

2.2 Application documents will be checked for completeness, and HRDC receipt checked as proof of payment of processing fees by the ETP.

2.3 The Council will acknowledge receipt of complete application and capture it on its database/applications register.

3. Desk Evaluation

3.1 The Council will conduct desk evaluation on application documents to ensure that the application meets specified NCBSC requirements and may request for additional information from the applicant where necessary.

4. Appointment of an Independent Reviewer

4.1 The Council may appoint an Independent Reviewer to evaluate the course and undertake validation at the ETP where necessary, especially in highly technical or specialized courses.

5. Processing NCBSC Applications

5.1 Applications will be allocated to processing officers for evaluation.

5.2 If there are any gaps, the ETP will be given 5 days to address/close the gaps.

5.3 An evaluation/validation report will be produced for consideration by the Unit Manager.

6. Consideration of the Evaluation Report

6.1 The recommendation report will be developed by the Manager and presented to the Approval Committee.

6.2 The recommendation will be considered for recognition or rejection by the Approval Committee

7. Decision on Approval

7.1 Following consideration of recommendations from the Processing Team, the Chairperson of the Approval Committee and the Director Funding will communicate the decision through the Decision Letter. Where Approval has been granted communication will be issued to the applicant within 30 days.

8. Appeals

8.1 An applicant may submit a written letter for appeal within 14 days of receipt of the decision letter as per the Council's Appeals Procedure.

SECTION C: ESTABLISHMENT OF NCBSC APPROVAL COMMITTEE

HRDC shall establish an Approval Committee to oversee the quality assurance activities and evaluation processes of Non-Credit Bearing Short Courses and advise the Executive Management (Exco) towards fulfilment of approval of NCBSC.

1.1 HRDC shall establish an Approval Committee as a Decision-Making organ for verification and approval of applications based on processing team findings and recommendations.

1.2 The Committee shall consist of five (5) members nominated by the Executive Management (Exco) and the chairperson shall be a member of the Exco.

1.3 The CEO shall appoint in writing the Secretary to the Committee.

1.4 Each member of the Committee shall serve for a period to be determine by the EXO.

1.5 The CEO may appoint a member to fill any vacancy arising during the year.

1.6 The Committee shall carry out its functions on behalf of, and report its progress to the Exco.

1.7 The Committee may set up taskforces, and also co-opt members for specific tasks.

SECTION D: POST RECOGNITION ACTIVITIES

1. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

To maintain recognition of NCBSC, ETPs must continue to comply with the aforementioned criteria. The primary responsibility for managing compliance lies with the ETP itself, as part of its on-going quality assurance systems and self-assessment. HRDC shall conduct Post Recognition Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) to ascertain that ETPs continue to adhere to the NCBSC requirements and to also render technical support to ETPs. The ETP shall appraise the Council on the following during M&E Visits.

1.1 Live evidence against all the information that the ETP submitted against criteria in the application form.

1.2 CVs of teaching staff with copies of educational qualifications and/or evaluation of qualifications reports and professional experience.

1.3 HRDC may conduct lesson observations to assess the quality and relevance of course delivery and assessment.

2. ADVERTISING AND USE OF HRDC LOGO

2.1 Approved/recognized short courses render an ETP eligible to use the HRDC Logo on advertising the HRDC approved non-credit bearing short courses only.

2.2 ETPs shall only use the HRDC Logo to advertise HRDC approved short courses and not operations related processes.

2.3 ETPs shall not be allowed to use the HRDC Logo on the certificates they award to course participants.

3. RENEWAL OF RECOGNITION OF NON-CREDIT BEARING SHORT COURSES

3.1 NCBSC will be recognized for a period not exceeding three (3) years.

3.2 The ETP shall apply for renewal three (3) months before the validity of the short course expires by duly completing and submitting the Renewal Application Form.

3.3 The application shall be accompanied by proof of payment of a non-refundable fee as prescribed in the Fees Schedule.

4. NOTIFICATION OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

Major changes to short courses have the potential to impact on the provision of teaching and learning and the ETP's capacity to meet the requirements in the Guidelines for NCBSC recognition and must be reported to HRDC. This attracts a processing fee as per the Fees Schedule

Major changes to short courses have the potential to impact on the provision of teaching and learning and the ETP's capacity to meet the NCBSC recognition requirements. Therefore, any changes must be duly reported to HRDC, which attracts a processing fee as outlined in the HRDC Fees Schedule

Significant changes include the following, but not limited to:

4.1 a change in the name/title of short course;
4.2 a change in the duration of a course;
4.3 a change in the content of short course of more than 30% of the core components;
4.4 a change in any franchising or partnership arrangements;
4.5 a change in the mode of delivery of course and assessment; and/or
4.6 a change in the course structure including modularization of a single unit course.

5. WITHDRAWAL OF RECOGNITION OF NON-CREDIT BEARING SHORT COURSES

The Council may withdraw recognition of a short course where:

5.1 the Council has good cause to believe that the ETP no longer meets the criteria set for the recognition of the short courses;
5.2 the ETP fails to comply with the NCBSC requirements including the intent and purpose of the intervention;
5.3 the Council decides to withdraw recognition of a short course, a written notice shall be issued to the ETP outlining the conditions of withdrawal; and/or
5.4 the withdrawal of a short course from an ETP shall be made public.
